

## **ARLINGTON PARK & RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES**

**Approved 12/12/2023**

*November 28, 2023*

The Town of Arlington Park and Recreation Commission came to order in the second floor meeting room at the Community Center on Tuesday, November 28, 2023, at 7:00pm.

**Commission Members:** Scott Walker, Phil Lasker, Shirley Canniff, Leslie Mayer, Jen Rothenberg and Josh Fenollosa. Recreation Director Joe Connelly and ConCom liaison Susan Chapnick were also present. Sarah Carrier was not in attendance.

**Anticipated Speakers:** Cecily Miller – Public Art and Community Engagement, Arlington Commission for Arts and Culture

**Preliminary Matter:** Scott Walker, Park & Recreation Commission Chair, took formal attendance and welcomed anticipated speakers and members of the public to the Recreation Commission meeting.

### **Park Permitting for Arlington Private Preschools**

Mr. Connelly stated that he has had several phone/email conversations about the permitting proposal with many of the program directors in town. It was noted that representatives from individual preschools were not in attendance this evening. Kim Grubb, director of the Recreation's Kid Care Preschool, did send out a program director's network email advising them of the meeting and how to contact the Recreation office.

Mr. Connelly –About 10 years ago informally surveyed which organizations use the parks/playgrounds.

- The Recreation office has received complaints from residents about the constant use of parks/playgrounds by organized programs, limiting the use for parents, grandparents and young children during the day.
- As a result of previous complaints Mr. Connelly has already worked successfully with two programs to permit specific locations and times.
- Programs are advertising town properties as part of their outdoor curriculum and play spaces in their brochures.
- Exponentially increasing use is causing more wear and tear on the equipment and surfaces resulting in the need for more money for maintenance, repairs and new equipment.
- Presented a draft policy for review – To limit overcrowding the policy would require programs to submit a permit request for a specific time slot each day. \$3-5K per program, fees to be built into tuition costs for 2024/2025 school year. Permitting will begin immediately with fees being imposed as of July 1. Balances would be adjusted, taking into consideration lack of use during bad weather etc.

Ms. Canniff – Explained licensing qualifications and differences. She suggested taking enrollment numbers into account when determining the fee as there are family care programs in town with as few as 8 children that would be required to pay a similar rate to center based programs with over 100 children. Mr. Connelly also noted that smaller programs use the parks/playgrounds once a day for a period of time, but the larger programs use the space in shifts over the course of the entire day with different groups of children. This practice is pushing the public out of the parks.

Mr. Lasker – Suggested tracking and scheduling use on Play Local.

Ms. Canniff – Will share the list of licensed programs from the EEC website.

Mr. Connelly – Some programs have shared their feelings that fees should not be imposed because they and their clients are taxpayers. The Commission discussed the various tax paying programs and individuals in town that are required to pay fees for field use; sports clubs, exercise groups, event holders.

Ms. Rothenberg – The Commission will release a statement outlining the policy and should include information on taxpayers and programs that pay rent to the town.

Action Items:

1. Permits required now
2. Information gathering
3. Fees TBD

**Public Arts Mural Conversation**

Cecily Miller is reaching out to the Commission for suggestions of park/playground sites to add a mural. She also explained various mural styles including “free walls” as they have in Cambridge which allow street artists to create their own art in a public location. The art is later removed to allow for other artists to share their work. The organization still has approximately \$35-40K in grant funding remaining from the Covid Recovery mural project. The funding expires November 2024.

- Mr. Lasker – McClennen Skate Park, once it is repaired and upgraded. Presented photos of a graffiti style mural at a skate park located in Wellfleet. Also suggested he Spy Pond bleachers depending on historical implications.
- Mr. Walker – Asked if the request was specifically for a “free wall”. Recommended the Rez pump house, which was also supported by Ms. Mayer.
- Ms. Canniff – Parks/playgrounds are not conducive to freestyle art. Would like to see murals focused on the location and age groups.
- Ms. Mayer – Suggested incorporating the memorial for MJ the bald eagle into a mural. Ms. Miller shared that Arlington Alarm has expressed interest in having a mural on the wall of their building. Mr. Connelly noted that it is near the cemetery which is believed to be where MJ lived. She also recommended the Spillway at the Rez and Habitat Gardens.
- Mr. Fenollosa – Recommended the Trader Joe’s wall abutting the bike path and Hurd field. Also suggested the Arlington Boys and Girls Club side facing Spy Pond which hosted a mural in the past.

Ms. Miller presented a slide show of murals of various styles by artists in locations around the world. She also stressed the impact of location, neighborhood enthusiasm, financial support and an inclusive, positive impact.

Action Items:

1. The Commission will email Mr. Connelly their site suggestions. A list of potential sites will be compiled and ranked.
2. The top 3 choices will be discussed at the December 12 Commission meeting.

**Comments and Items for Future Meetings –**

- Permitting of alcohol for events on property under Park Commission jurisdiction.
- Public Arts Mural Location Discussion – 12/12

**Bench Donation at Reservoir** – Submitted by Stephen Emsbo-Mattingly. Requesting dedication plaque on existing bench located at the Monroe Brook inlet. Initial wording was adjusted in accordance with Commission guidelines and approved by Mr. Connelly. Ms. Chapnick noted that Liam Mattingly was very involved with ConCom and felt that the bench and location was a fitting tribute.

**Spy Pond Picnic Table Donation** – Submitted by Paul Harvey. Mr. Connelly met on-site with Karen Grossman (FOSPP) to discuss ideal locations for a picnic table installation. The Commission determined that the flat, grassy area near the trash receptacles would likely be the best choice. It was noted that while the area is not accessible, there is an accessible table next to it. Ms. Rothenberg advised that this area was also used for dry-land exercise by A-B Crew. Plaque wording was approved by Mr. Connelly. The plaque will either be applied to the top center of the table or on the side.

**Correspondence Received**

1. Parallel construction responses have been received via email.
2. Email letter from Rogers Pierce Board of Directors regarding park/playground permitting.

**Approval of Minutes** - Tabled

**New Business** - N/A

**Public Comment** - N/A

Mr. Lasker motioned to adjourn at 9:45pm, seconded by Ms. Canniff and approved 5-0.

The Arlington Park & Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes were respectfully submitted by Deanna Stacchi.